

Health and Safety Following a Tornado

*As released by the temporary Storm Service Center for Christian County
The Bridge Church, 308 W. Mount Vernon St., Nixa, Missouri*

3-15-06

To avoid further injury or illness after a tornado, the temporary Storm Service Center for Christian County makes the following recommendations:

- Make sure immunizations are up-to-date, especially tetanus. Adults should have a tetanus booster every 10 years.

The Christian County Health Department will provide free tetanus shots to affected residents at The Bridge Church, 308 W. Mount Vernon.

- If water has been declared unsafe to drink, or if there is uncertainty whether water contamination has occurred, water should be boiled vigorously for three minutes before being used for drinking, cooking or teeth brushing.

At this time there are no current boil orders for surrounding communities in Christian County. Individual wells should be tested once power is restored, as a safeguard against contamination. Water is being delivered to Area Command Posts by the Emergency Management Agency, and its partnering agencies, on a daily basis. Residents are advised to contact their local command post for any additional special needs or questions.

- A lack of refrigeration and the pressure surrounding a tornado can have a dangerous effect on food.
 - Refrigerated foods that have been held at above 40°F for more than two hours should be disposed of. Examples include milk, yogurt, soft cheese, custard, raw or cooked meat, poultry or seafood, fresh eggs, egg substitutes, soups, casseroles or stews and creamy dressings.
 - Butter, margarine, hard and processed cheese, fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, opened jars of peanut butter, relishes, jelly, BBQ sauce, ketchup, mustard and olives are generally safe without refrigeration for a few days.
 - Frozen foods that remain frozen are not a risk. If potentially hazardous foods, such as meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, egg products and soft cheeses, are thawed, but are still cold or have ice crystals on them, they should be used as soon as possible. If potentially hazardous foods are thawed or reach 45°F or warmer, they should be discarded.
 - Canned goods that are bulging or have broken seals may also be compromised and should be discarded.

Residents needing assistance with food, ice, etc., should contact their local Area Command Post. American Red Cross canteen services are driving through affected areas to primarily service those volunteers assisting in clean-up efforts.

- Proper handwashing can also help prevent the spread of many illnesses.
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and running water.
 - If no water is available, use a hand sanitizer.
 - Dry hands with a disposable towel.
 - Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes until hands have been properly washed or sanitized.

For more information, call the temporary Storm Service Center at 417-725-2753.